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Message Text

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SS-20 USIA-15 ACDA-19 OMB-01 AID-20 MC-02 /157 R

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R 240149Z NOV 73
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY SEOUL
INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 231279

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, KS, SA
SUBJECT: SAUDI ARABIAN APPROACH FOR ROKG TECHNICIANS

REF: SEOUL 7812

1. WE SUSPECT THAT THE "SAUDI NATIONAL CHEMICAL CORPORATION" MAY BE PRIVATE SAUDI ARABIAN TRADING ESTAB-LISHMENT THAT IS INTERESTED IN ESTABLISHING A SOURCE OF
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KOREAN SKILLED MANPOWER TO ENABLE IT TO BID EFFECTIVELY FOR SAUDI ARABIAN SERVICE CONTRACTS. THIS INTEREST MAY REFLECT EITHER (A) EXPECTATION THAT COSTS OF KOREAN

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PERSONNEL WOULD BE LESS EXPENSIVE THAN THOSE OF COMPARABLE US OR EUROPEAN PERSONNEL OR (B) CALCULATION THAT CURRENT STRAINS IN US - SAUDI RELATIONS MIGHT LEAD US TO WITHDRAW OR BE FORCED TO WITHDRAW AMERICAN CONTRACTOR PERSONNEL NOW WORKING IN THOSE FIELDS IN SAUDI ARABIA.

2. WE ARE NOT AT THIS POINT INTERESTED IN ENCOURAGING KOREANS TO ENGAGE IN COMPETITION WITH AMERICAN COMPANIES FOR LUCRATIVE SAUDI GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS IN MILITARY OR OTHER FIELDS. NOR WOULD WE WANT WORD TO GET BACK TO SAUDIS THAT USG WAS PREPARED TO ACCEPT THIRD-COUNTRY NATIONALS AS SUBSTITUTE FOR AMERICAN PERSONNEL IN PROJECTS

IN WHICH USG HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN ADVISORY OR CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION BASIS. AT SAME TIME, WE RECOGNIZE DESIRA-BILITY OF RECIPROCATING KIM'S APPROACH TO YOU BY PROVIDING SOME INFORMATION ON US MILITARY SUPPORT CONTRACTS WITH SAUDI ARABIAN ARMED FORCES.

3. YOU MAY TELL KIM THAT SAUDI NATIONAL CHEMICAL CORPORATION APPEARS HAVE IN MIND SAUDI ARMY ORDNANCE CORPS PROGRAM (SOCP) UNDER WHICH AMERICAN - SAUDI CIVILIAN CONTRACTOR (BENDIX-SYANCO) UNDERTAKES TO PROVIDE TRAINING, LOGISTICS, AND MAINTENANCE SUPPORT SERVICES FOR VEHICLES IN SAUDI ARMY INVENTORY. PROGRAM BEGAN IN 1966 AND WAS INITIALLY UNDER SUPERVISION OF U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS. WE ARE NOW IN PROCESS OF SHIFTING RESPONSI-BILITY FOR CONTRACT MANAGEMENT FROM US TO SAUDI AGENCIES. CURRENT BENDIX-SYANCO CONTRACT EXPIRES IN NOVEMBER 1974 AND THERE IS LIKELIHOOD THAT OTHER FIRMS MAY SEEK COMPETE WITH BENDIX-SYANCO AT THAT TIME FOR NEW CONTRACT WHICH WE EXPECT WILL NEED BE AWARDED IN ORDER PROVIDE VITAL TECHNICAL SKILLS AND SERVICES WHICH SAUDIS NOT YET ABLE TO SUPPLY FROM THEIR OWN RESOURCES. PRESUMABLY IT IS IN ANTICIPATION OF BIDDING ON THIS CONTRACT THAT SAUDI NATIONAL CHEMICAL CORPORATION WOULD LIKE TO HAVE SERVICES OF KOREAN PERSONNEL.

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4. EMBASSY JIDDA MAY WISH PROVIDE ADDITIONAL COMMENTS, INCLUDING INFORMATION ON BONA FIDES OF SAUDI NATIONAL CHEMICAL CORPORATION. KISSINGER

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